



GOLDER RANCH FIRE DISTRICT

Fire ♦ Rescue ♦ Medical
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Fire Chief Randy Karrer

It's that time of year again, the time of year when the days get longer and hotter. We are all so busy in our day-to-day lives that we might unintentionally leave a precious child in a hot car. While we like to think it'd never happen to us, the facts prove that it can happen to anyone! As of today, two children have lost their lives after being left in a hot car. The most recent, happened in Texas and was reported on the news this morning.

Last year, 2013, there were at least forty-four deaths of children in vehicles; thirty-nine which has been confirmed as heatstroke and five which, based upon the known circumstances, are most likely heatstroke ([2013 list](#)). In 2012 there were 34 deaths of children due to hyperthermia (heatstroke) after being left in or having gained access to hot cars, trucks, vans and SUV's. Since 1998 there have been at least 606 documented cases of heatstroke deaths of children in vehicles. This data and study shows that these incidents can occur on days with relatively mild (i.e., ~ 70 degrees F) temperatures and that vehicles can reach life-threatening temperatures very rapidly.

STATISTICS

Total number of U.S. heatstroke deaths of children left in cars, 2014: **2**

- Total number of U.S. heatstroke deaths of children left in cars, 2013: **44**
- Total number of U.S. heatstroke deaths of children left in cars, 1998-present: **608**
- **Average number of U.S. child heatstroke fatalities per year since 1998: 38**
- See [Monthly Statistics](#)
- See [Per Capita Deaths by State](#)
- **Circumstances**
 - An examination of media reports about the 606 child vehicular heatstroke deaths for an fourteen year period (1998 through 2013) shows the following circumstances:
 - 52% - child "forgotten" by caregiver (316 Children)
 - 29% - child playing in unattended vehicle (175)
 - 18% - child intentionally left in vehicle by adult (108)
 - 1% - circumstances unknown (6)
- **Ages**

The children that have died from vehicular heatstroke in the United States (1998-2013) have ranged in age from 5 days to 14 years. More than half of the deaths are children under 2 years of age. Below are the percentage of total deaths (and the number of deaths) sorted by age.

- Less than 1 year old = 31% (184)
- 1-year old = 22% (134)
- 2-years old = 20% (118)
- 3-years old = 14% (84)
- 4-years old = 6% (35)
- 5-years old = 3% (19)
- 6-years old = 2% (9)
- 7-years old = < 1% (3)
- 8-years old = 1% (3)
- 9-years old = < 1% (2)
- 10-years old = 1% (3)
- 11-years old = < 1% (2)
- 12-years old = < 1% (1)
- 13-years old = < 1% (1)
- 14-years old = < 1% (3)
- Unknown = < 1% (2)

How can you help assure that you don't leave your most precious child in your car? If you use a diaper bag, put the diaper bag in the front seat next to you. If you take your lunch to work, put it in the back seat so you have to retrieve it from there when you get to work. Taking the kids to the store with you? Put a stuffed toy on the front seat next to you as a reminder but do not leave it there all the time. Place it on the seat only after you have properly buckled your child into their car seat.